

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

# All THE YEAR ROUND

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## MARRIED TO ORDER.

A ROMANCE OF MODERN DAYS.

BY ESME STUART.

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### CHAPTER XVI. A FRIEND'S VIEW.

THE old Palace was very silent during the following week. The servants walked softly down the long, lonely passages, sorrowing for the young master and bewildered by the helplessness of the old man whose life until now had been so active. It was the Duke who now took the direction of affairs, whilst Penelope sat with her father and attended to his wants. She was home again; the old love for the wild glen and for all the beauty of the mountains came back tenfold, but it now seemed to her mixed up with her love for Forster Bethune. She wanted to know how he would like to hear the dashing Rotherapy, and to watch the great bare hills and the more distant mountain-tops.

But underneath all this feeling was the terrible, oppressive thought, "I must marry Philip Gillbanks, I must. I was always prepared for it, and I must obey my uncle. Why did I not do it at once, before I had seen Forster? then perhaps—would love have come? He is very kind, and he loves me. Perhaps it might have been otherwise, but now, now it is impossible to forget Forster; and yet I must, I must forget him."

She walked down the long passage and listened for the soft tread of the ghost, but she only heard the echo of her own footfalls upon the stones. The ghost would not appear to her because she was going to demean herself. Then she thought that

she would marry Philip Gillbanks, but that she would be as a stranger to him, and he must be as a stranger to her. His reward would surely be great enough if he could say that he had married the Princess of Rotherapy; that must suffice him. She hated his money, at the same time as she knew that it was necessary to the Winskells and the reason of her misery.

She made no preparations for her private wedding. She had brought back enough dresses from London to last many months, and she would wear one of them; which one seemed to her of no consequence. Her uncle, on the contrary, busied himself to make one part of the old wing at least temporarily comfortable and fairly weather-tight. The ghost's boudoir must be Penelope's morning-room, and there were several more rooms near to it which could be set apart for the young people. The village carpenter was set to work to make a few repairs, but not a soul, not even old Betty, was told the truth. It might shock their feelings; but then the Duke knew it was absolutely necessary. The settlement could not be signed till the marriage, and the principal could not be touched till Penelope became Mrs. Gillbanks Winskell. The Duke had insisted upon the family name being adopted by the purchaser of the Palace.

So during all those days Penelope went about hardening her heart against Philip. His daily letter was sometimes answered by a few lines, chiefly on business, and she raised her head more proudly as she stepped out into the lonely glen, feeling that at least she was saving the lands; though the price to pay was heavier than she could have foreseen. Her face stiffened more and more into an expression of pride that was unnatural in one so young and so

little accustomed to the world. As she walked up and down the glen with her great dog Nero, she was very unlike a bride elect, and it was only in her uncle's presence that she made an effort to appear without the slight frown which was now almost habitual to her.

She wanted to know what Forster thought of her strange engagement, and yet she did not like to ask. The whole episode appeared like a dream, so sudden had been her departure from London. She blamed herself for having made a mistake, and she was angry with both Forster and Philip for having brought her into this miserable state of mind. Once she had hoped to return home full of the delight of an accomplished mission.

In the meanwhile Philip had hastened back to London to inform his friends of his happiness. Owing to certain transactions with the Duke and to the sudden death of Penelope's brother, no one but his father had been told of his engagement. He could hardly believe it himself. Indeed, he was overjoyed when he had found his suit encouraged by the Duke, and still more astonished when he had implied that his niece would certainly receive him favourably.

Philip did not guess the reason, for to him it seemed as if rich men of title, who were said to have proposed to the Princess, would certainly have been preferred to him. Had she wished it, of course Miss Winskell could have accepted much richer men than himself. Philip was not vain, and from this he could only conclude that Penelope loved him, and he was willing to believe that pride alone made her receive his advances with shy reserve. When she was his wife, then he would soon show her how entirely he loved her, and how willing he was to own her superiority. The death of the heir, the journey north, and the hasty decision of the Duke about the wedding, had not left Philip a moment in which to think of himself. When he reached London again, in his first moment of leisure he betook himself to the Bethunes' house to find Forster, in order to tell him the wonderful news.

Mrs. Bethune was in the drawing-room alone when Philip was shown in, and as usual she received him very cordially.

"I am very glad to see you, Mr. Gillbanks. It was only this morning that Forster was saying he could not imagine what had become of you, for you did not appear at the club on his special night;

however, you must not let him become too encroaching. Forster forgets that every one cannot devote his life to the cause. I told him you had your sister to see after. He is coming in soon, so do wait for him. I don't know what has come to him lately. He is so very absent-minded. He introduced Adela as his wife the other day, and she had to pull his coat, and to tell him he really was not married."

"Forster is absent!" said Gillbanks, blushing as if the allusion were personal. "Indeed——"

"Dora says he must be in love. I can't fancy Forster being in love at all, can you?"

"Oh, no! I'm sure he is not in love."

"I am glad you agree with me, because, 'entre nous,' dear Mr. Gillbanks, I do dread Forster's taste in that line. He will fall a victim to some poor dear thing who can't find a good situation."

Philip laughed, and just then Forster entered. His face brightened at the sight of his friend.

Mrs. Bethune left the two together, and Forster began at once.

"I thought you were ill or lost. I was going round to your house this evening, Philip. You were so much wanted the other day."

"I'm so sorry. Yes, I ought to have telegraphed; but I wanted to come and tell you myself. Do you know, Forster—can you believe it?—she has accepted me."

"Who has accepted you?" said Forster, suddenly turning towards his friend.

"The only woman I should ask, of course—the Princess. But I've been living in a dream ever since; I can hardly believe it myself."

Forster sat down by his mother's writing-table, and pretended to be looking for some writing-paper.

"You have asked her to marry you? And she has accepted you? My dear Philip——"

Forster paused.

"Yes, it is extraordinary. I don't wonder you are surprised. I can hardly believe it myself, and report says she has had heaps of offers, so she——"

Forster still searched for paper, and for a few seconds his face was hidden. When he turned again towards Philip his face was paler, but he was quite calm.

"This is news. Yes, I am surprised. I can hardly understand it, but I wish you joy, Philip, of course, all joy. Tell me,

does she—no, I mean how long has this been going on? I saw her brother's death in the papers, and heard she had left town."

"Yes, indeed. It is awfully sad. I went with them to Rothery. It seems like a dream that I have really won her."

"Philip, are you sure she—"

"Sure she accepted me! Yes, sure. Her uncle is most anxious that the wedding should take place at once, for this death has thrown everything into a hopeless state of confusion. The father is useless. He was nearly drowned. Such a queer old man! I have told you about him. Penelope really wants protection and some brightness in her dull life. Down there all seems so quiet and sad. Of course, I would rather have waited longer, so that she should know me better, but I have to obey the Duke."

"But this should not be," said Forster, trying to speak calmly. "Philip, have you really considered it all round?"

"You did not know it was earnest, perhaps; but with me it was love at first sight."

"She is very beautiful, and she might become a great power, but she must learn to love you, Philip. Are you sure—? No, I don't quite understand the haste, only I've no right to interfere. Does she know what a lucky woman she is?"

"Nonsense, Forster, the luck is all on my side."

"They are inordinately proud."

"They have a right to be."

"Right! No one has that right. But I am the loser."

"Only for a time. For the present I must give her all my energies. The old place wants repairing. I think she trusts me, and she believes in my love. Forster, if you had loved her, I should have had no chance. You are the only man really worthy of her, but I can't pretend to wish to give her up. She seems to me as if she were too good and too beautiful for this earth, and if it weren't for the Duke—but he was entirely on my side, and she trusts him immensely."

"Forgive me, Philip, but is she marrying you because the Duke tells her to do so?" said Forster slowly.

"Why should you ask that? She might marry any one. I have to see after many things before the wedding. I'm not allowed to ask even you to it, Forster, so that I shall indeed feel very privately

married! The brother's death naturally makes all this imperative."

Forster once more turned away; then suddenly he put his hand on Philip's shoulder.

"Philip, don't do this thing. You don't know her enough; besides, there is the work. You will never return to it."

Philip laughed. It was so like Forster to think "the Cause" came before anything else.

"I know I'm an unprofitable servant; but, indeed, Forster, you must be a little pitiful to the weak. I can't live without her. Of course it's horridly sudden, but that is the Duke's doing and hers. I have it in black and white."

"I'm a fool to try and show you the danger. I don't know if Penelope Winskell can love any one. She is one of those women one reads of sometimes, who can destroy but cannot create love. She could love but once. Philip, give her up."

"The higher call is not for me," said Philip humbly. "I wish I'd confided sooner in you, but it seemed like saying one wanted to propose to an angel from heaven. She is so self-contained and so beautiful; she is like no other woman I have ever met."

"That is true, she might have become—"

"Yes, one of your best disciples; I know I am depriving you of that homage, Forster, but her uncle assured me she was not really averse to marriage, only very difficult to please. Imagine what a miracle it is that I can please her, and that she can even put up with me, but it's true. Forster, wish me joy even if I have disappointed you."

"One word more, Philip. Have you forgotten that you are rich? Forgive me, but I can't believe she is worthy of you. Is it possible that—"

Philip Gillbanks reddened and looked hurt.

"Forster! What an idea! Of course the Winskells are poor, and my money is entirely at their service; but to think my Princess cares for filthy lucre is ludicrous. If she did there was no reason why she should not have accepted Vernon Heath. He is fabulously rich."

"Heath! Did he want to marry her?" Forster's face expressed disgust.

"I can't stay any longer. The Duke wants me to do some business for him."

"All right. Look here, Philip, you are the most unselfish man in creation, but you know what I think about it. I hate the whole business. These wretched Dukes and Kings who play at—"

But Philip was gone.

"My Princess has thought me worthy of her," he said to himself, as with a smiling face he went about London to do the Duke's bidding.

#### CHAPTER XVII. UNWELCOMED.

"WHAT, the Princess is to be married off no better than a gipsy!" cried Betty, when she at last heard the news. It was the evening before the wedding.

"There's no luck to a weddin' wid oald acquaintance," said Oldcorn. "Mister Gillbanks was a strange soight the furst neet he drew his chair to t' fire an' set hissel here. Ah dar say he thowt hissel t' happiest o' mortals, but, hooivver, afoor long he'll come sec a crack as ivver he knew when he startit here. Mister Gillbanks wud be a gay bit better minding his shop."

"His shop! As if he's got one!" said Betty.

"Soar they say. Gwddie heard it hissel."

"Tis trading, you silly! His father is in the big line with something, but Mr. Philip himself is a big gentleman."

"I heear noo! His father and he is just the same. There's no King's blood in his body. An' alk! My stars! The Princess should a' wed a King."

"Money's the king now, Jim. Up in London I saw a sight o' things you know nothing about, and Miss Penelope couldn't have married in fine style now her poor brother's lying dead and hardly cold in his grave."

So spake the underlings, whilst the King, whose mind was becoming somewhat clearer and his temper more cross-grained, began bitterly to reproach the Duke. If the estate were saved, it would be at the expense of a marriage with one who could boast of no drop of blue blood.

The Duke alone was firm. He had weighed all carefully. He knew full well that his niece might have married an aristocrat, but that not one of them would have propped up the ruined house of Rothery. Only Philip Gillbanks's love had stood the test.

The Duke was a man of the world. In his heart he disliked a mésalliance as much

as did his niece, but such things were now done every day, and the misfortune must be borne with true courage.

Penelope had offered no remonstrance. His one fear had been that she would not ratify his choice; but she had said nothing, and he was proud of the Princess. She understood the meaning of self-sacrifice as well as he did, when great difficulties had to be faced.

On this grey evening the chill autumn feeling had crept into the air, making the Rothery glen sad in its beauty, as Penelope stepped out. The old dog followed her as if he understood her feelings, his tail between his legs, and keeping close beside her instead of bounding forward along his favourite paths.

As she came out of the Palace the Princess noted many things around her as if she were seeing them for the last time. Near the front door, and on the spot where the distant lake could be seen, her eyes first rested upon old Jim Oldcorn, standing near the King's wheel-chair. The old man could not endure to stay indoors, but preferred being brought out, so that like a wounded lion he could still watch the scenes of his many exploits. His language was even less choice than of old, and patience was a virtue he held in contempt, so he sat growling to himself and cursing the fatal accident that had deprived him of his son and of his own great strength. He had never cared much for Penelope, and now the sight of her often seemed to bring on a fit of temper. Faithful Jim Oldcorn, like a sturdy oak, could bear much and could weather any storm which the King raised. No opprobrious title hurled at him by his master appeared to disturb his placid temper.

"Who's that?" growled the King as he heard Penelope shut the hall door.

"It's nobbody but the Princess," said Jim calmly; "do ye want any transakshuns with her?"

"Tell her to come here," said the King, seasoning his remark with a few oaths; but Penelope was already approaching of her own accord.

"Jim Oldcorn, if any one comes and enquires for me, say I am in the glen," she remarked somewhat imperiously.

Jim nodded and moved away a few steps as he muttered to himself:

"Ah wadn't tie mesel' ta neahbody if ah didn't like him. He'll a' a strange bride, but it sarret him rest. There's no mixin' sma' beer with the King's wine."

"Come close to me, Penelope. Curse it! I'm a mere wreck, and my hearing is getting bad. What does Greybarrow mean by all this fooling? He says I gave my consent. If I did it's because you were only a woman; but my lad's gone now, gone—he'd have saved the old place."

"Would he?" said Penelope coldly, though the colour rose to her cheeks. "You know, father, that he would and could do nothing of the kind. As for your consent, you care little enough. You have never troubled yourself about me, because I was only a woman."

"I wanted sons and I had but one—but one, and he's taken from me. The parson came and preached resignation. The devil take him, he hasn't lost a son. What does he know about it? I would have set the dog on him if I could. He knew I was tied, or he never would have dared to come and preach to me."

"Is that all you wanted to say?"

The old man paused and looked up at this proud daughter. Her pride equalled his own. It could not be crushed, and therefore he hated her. He collected his thoughts a little, and then burst forth again.

"No, I wanted to tell you that this pale-faced milksop whom you have promised to marry has no right to come here. I won't have him near me, so keep him out of my sight. If you will go your own way, I will have none of him. A tradesman, too, a man of no birth, and you demean yourself to marry him. Your aunt would never have fallen so low."

"I have promised to marry Philip Gillbanks because it will save the property of the Winskells," said Penelope proudly.

"Save it! I could save it. You think your interference was wanted. I tell you that at the right time the property would not have been sold."

Penelope laughed scornfully.

"I trusted my uncle. Happily he has known how to help me and how to preserve the old rights."

"You have sold the land of your fathers to a man of low birth. Heaven forgive you, Penelope."

"I have not done so," she answered, clutching her hand, but too proud to show the anger she felt. "Everything that is done will be done in my name. A Winskill alone shall save the property."

"And how will you save yourself? Get along with you, Penelope. You are no daughter of mine. If you and Greybarrow

choose to meddle, you must go your own way, and the devil go with you."

Penelope walked away, and old Nerc followed her as a mute follows a coffin.

She entered the glen, and here the roar of the Rothery appeared to harmonise with the wild tumult of her brain. Her father she had never loved, but he was her father, and something in the very fierceness of his impotent rage seemed to unite her to him and to make his words sting because of their truth. How could she have done this thing so lightly? Now that the time was come it seemed terrible. She did not love Philip; she hated him, because she had learnt what love meant. An evil fate in the form of love had come to chastise her for fancying she could do this thing in her own strength of character.

She followed the path in its ascent towards the higher land, keeping always close to the noisy roar of the Rothery, feeling as if she were pursued by her father's curses. Her uncle, who alone could have soothed her, was gone to meet Philip. It was sixteen miles to the nearest railway station, and when he came back Philip would be with him.

At last she reached the end of the glen, and gazed at the distant mountains. Grey clouds were slowly passing over the valleys, and occasionally a gleam broke through the grey masses, then quickly faded away again. The mountain-tops looked very, very far away, and all around was sadness which seemed to wrap the whole of her being in wordless despair.

"How can I save myself?" she repeated softly several times. "How can I? There must be some way. Why should I be sacrificed when my father does not even thank me for it? Why not let it all go? It is not too late even now. Let us be beggars, but let me be Forster's wife. He cares nothing about money. He cannot understand the pride of the old traditions. In that he fails. Yes, he fails. I am stronger than he is, and I will be strong unless I can find some way out of it."

She rested her arms on the top of the little gate and gazed out upon the open land. The voice of the Rothery was quiet here. It had but a child's voice, and had not yet been seized with the mad rage which possessed it lower down.

"I will save myself. I will. He will be too weak to resist."

Her lip curled in scorn of Philip Gillbanks, and she pressed her hand against her burning forehead.

"Forster would have been my master ; this man shall be my slave," and the last trace of softness disappeared from the beautiful face.

How long she stayed there she never knew. The glen seemed full of strange shapes flitting about. A hawk poised on apparently motionless wing far above her on the bare hillside, and a lark flew up to sing one last evening song of unpremeditated joy. A little eft wriggled across the path, and a large bird flew noisily above her.

Suddenly she seemed to feel an irresistible power forcing her to turn and look back down the darkening glen. She resisted the feeling as long as she could, but at last she turned round and gazed down the path. He was there, she saw him coming, shadowy at first, then clearer. A tall man, with the honest, firm step of one who fears nothing and hopes everything. For one moment Penelope allowed herself to believe that it was Forster Bethune—only for one moment—then all her being revolted at the step she was going to take, and an evil pride took possession of her. By that sin fell the angels, and Penelope was a woman.

#### AMONG THE LITTLE PEOPLE.

WHEN Saint Patrick made a clean sweep of the reptiles in Ireland, he did not press the matter with the fairies. No doubt the good old saint saw that they would be sorely missed by his simple peasant folk ; for the "little people" of the Irish interfere oftener for the good than for the evil of mortals. So, while the toads and the snakes plunged, at the saint's bidding, into the sea and swam mightily to gain Scotland's southernmost shore, the sprites held their tiny sides in laughter, and went back rejoicing to their raths and cromlechs, now more theirs than ever. And there they dwell, in the wood and in the meadow, on the hill and in the dale, and wherever the moonlight falls softly enough to dance upon and lights every drop of dew that hangs on flower or tree. Many there are who have no particular profession or dealings with man. They are content to drink the dew, and batten on the honey the miser bee has overlooked in his quest; to ring the changes on every peal of blue bells, whose chimes, we are told, come only as the fragrance thereof to mortals ; they shout to make the drowsy daisy ope her eye to

the moon, and make the burnished buttercup a lordly helmet for their impish heads. And then their pranks ! What delight it is to stop Paddy's pig at the four cross-roads as the two are returning benighted from the fair, and chase the unhappy animal every way but the right ! Well does Paddy know it is the "little people" at their tricks, but he does not allow it to himself until the last, for he knows the chill sweat of fear that will break out on him when he is forced to confess the truth.

"Sure, 'tis the sperrits," he mutters at last, mopping his forehead with his red handkerchief, "an' be the Holy Vargin I'll be kilt befor' mornin' huntin' this devil, if I can't think of a prayer."

So, with head still uncovered, he hurries through an "Ave Maria" or a "Pater Noster," and, after crossing himself devoutly, buckles to the chase again. Then all is sure to go well, for the "sperrits" have respect unto piety, and will soon stop their pranks. Then they are off to the churchyard—the wild, overgrown churchyard, where anything and everything that can grow by itself, or creep and climb with help of its neighbours, is left to grow and creep and climb, wrapping the silent beds of the dead with a thick green mantle. There they play hide-and-seek round the leaning stones, and in and out of the shadows, and woe to the belated passer-by who omits to pray for the souls of the dead ! He will be terrified by light footsteps following in his path, and, where the shadowy outlines of the sleeping dead are thickest—as it were some camp all wrapped in slumber until the day shall come—a faint, pale light shines, the corpse-light that fairy hands have lit to scare him. Should you seek to assure the awestruck narrator of this grisly adventure—for with the joyous light of day his fears will vanish, and he will be a hero, a nervous and, for the time, unhinged hero, but still a hero—that this dread light was naught but the phosphorus in the bones of his ancestors that have been rudely dug from their quiet cell to make room for a later arrival, he will turn an eye of scorn on you ; "Arrah, whisht," he'll say, "sure, d'y'e think I'm a fool entirely ? Begorra, I saw it with the two eyes o' me blinkin' and winkin', and devil a wan but the sperrits it was that lit it ! Posporus ! Wisha, be asly !"

In a small village in the South of Ireland there was a wooden-legged tailor of our acquaintance, whose homeward path led

through an old graveyard that lay round a ruined church. He loved spirits assuredly, but such spirits as he measured by noggins when the property of another, and which he swallowed and measured—roughly—by inches when it was his own. His faithful spouse "Judy" always met her lord at the entrance to the graveyard, when he had been somewhat detained of an evening by society engagements. The stout knight of the needle would then settle his crutch firmly under his right arm, grasp "Judy" with his left hand, shut his eyes very tight, and request prayers for his mother, who lay buried near.

"Pray for me mother, Judy," he'd say, "pray for the soul av me mother. Bad scran to ye, Judy, if ye don't pray I'll hit ye a polthogue av me crutch!" Thus they twain passed through the dreadful night.

But these are a ne'er-do weel lot who content themselves with practical jokes on all who fear or think evil of them. Others there are who have a profession, or mission to men. To the former class—the professional gentlemen—the Leith-phrogan (pronounced Leprachaun) belongs. He is the fairy cobbler, and, when the moon gives him light, he plies his trade diligently, seated on some little stone or tuft of grass in the dew-bespangled field. His mode of dress is uncertain, but he usually—in the South, at any rate—affects a high-crowned brown hat, with a little brown feather stuck in the front. His jerkin is of untanned mouse-skin, and his tights are of the same material. A pair of stout little brogues of his own making shield his fairy feet from the sharp-pointed grasses and pebbles, and a businesslike apron completes his working dress. And there he sits on the moonlit side of some hedge, crooning to himself in the ancient Irish tongue, and tapping away busily with his tiny wooden hammer. The sticky gum of the fir-tree is his wax to wax the spider's web withal that he may bind sole to upper; his nails are the prickles of the thistle; a stout thorn from yonder bramble-bush his awl. He it is who can tell where lies a hidden treasure, or even give to him who can hold him a purse of gold. Happy the wight who hears the busy "tap-tap" of the sprite's hammer and can dare to grasp and hold this little Proteus, who transforms himself into divers shapes to elude his captor. When he has done all he knows, and still is firmly grasped, he returns to his own form, and may be bound, but

only by manacles made from a plough chain or a clue of homespun yarn; and then he is content to buy his release by disclosing the treasure. But even then he will cheat mortal if he can, as the following chronicle—"An' devil a lie in it," said old Tim, when he finished—will show. Tim Flannigan was an old man when he used to tell us the story, but he never had varied one detail, and called all the saints down from heaven to bear witness to the truth thereof with a freedom that impressed the listener with the fact that the holy band were under a lasting obligation to Tim Flannigan of Ballymuck, and were only too glad to oblige him with their testimony to anything he asserted, especially in the matter of fairy cobblers.

" 'Tis no lie I'm tellin' ye," he'd say. "It happened to me as true as I'm settin' here shmekin'. 'Tis nigh on thirty year back now, an' I was young thin," he'd add, with an air of one who foresaw contradiction, but was not going to stand it, "not more nor a fairish gossoon, but I was the devil of a likely bhoy. I tuk two boneens to the fair av Corrigeen that mornin', and sowled them well, too, to a jobber from Cork—wan Murphy. You couldn't but know him, he's buyin' shtill; he have a grey whisker and wan eye turned to the north."

"But, Tim, about the fairy. Can't you—"

"Arrah, be aisy, an' I'll be tellin' ye. 'Twas half duskish, an' I laving the fair, an' whin I got to the cross-roads—where they bate Foxy Jack, the water-bailiff, for summonsing the bhoys that killed all the salmon—begorra, by that 'twas pitch dark night, on'y for the moon, an' it was as light as day. I tuk the near way through Biddy Mahoney's farm there, an' I was just goin' through the gap into the big field beyant the house, whin I heerd a sort of rappin' t'other side av the fence, like them thrushes—bad luck to the robbers—whin they welt a sheltie-head on a shtone to git at the mate av him. 'Glory be to God this night an' day,' says I to meself, 'an' is it ateing snails ye are now, ye thief of the world, whin every public-house is shut long ago, an' ye ought to be ashleep?' An' with that I wint up to the fence, threadin' as soft as a cat, to see the devil at his supper. But, be Saint Patrick, if ye saw what I saw ye'd be dead long ago with the fright. There he was, the Leith-phrogan, settin' on a stone, an' knockin' the sprigs into a little

owld brogue he was mendin'. He was mighty busy with the job an' niver lifted his head, but wint on weltin' away an' singin' a bit, fine an' aisy, to himself. Be the holy poker, me heart made wan leap to come out av me mouth, but me swalla' was too dry for to let anything up, or, begorra, down ayther, an' back it fell agin to the bottom o' me stomach, an' stopped there. 'Cop the blackguard, Tim dear!' says I to meself, an' wid that I threw me owld hat over him, an' leppin' over the few stones there was in the gap, I put wan hand on the crown av the caubeen an' with the other I took a hoult av me lad under-nathe it an' pulled him out. Arrah, don't be talkin', 'tis thin he had the scoldin'! He scolded an' blackguarded me most outrageous, an' iviry word av it in Irish. Thin he comminced plantin' little spalpeens of thorns in me fingers—faith, he'd got his pockets full of them—an' diggin' holes in me fists wid a thorn he had for borin' the soles av his brogues. 'Have conduct,' says I, 'or, be the holy fly, I'll make porridge of ye're head agin a shtone.' Wirra! he let wan squeal, an' 'twas a scrawlin', scratchin' cat I had in me han's! But I prissed him tighther for that, an' he thried me wid iviry bashte he could think av, 'cept cows an' such; he always kept small. 'Give me ye're pot av gould,' says I, whin he was tired av changin' hisself into waysels an' rats an' other monstheres, an' was in the shape of a Christian wanst more—though, Heaven forgive me, I didn't mane he was a raal Christian. 'Give me ye're gould,' says I, shakin' the thief fit to bring his brogues off his feet. 'Tis buried below that thistle,' says he, pointing the vegetable cut to me wid a han' like the claw av a rat. 'Be herrin's,' says I, 'I'll mark it for meself,' and wid that I whipped off me garther—for I had a fine pair av knee-kreeches on me that Micky Doolan—rest his sowl this night!—had made an illegant fit for me after me gran'father was buried, an' a nate pair av grey stockin's as long ss me leg. No sooner did I give him his liberty than he went out like a candle, an' I niver see him agin, but I put the garther round the thistle an' was off like a Jack hare for a spade. Divil a sowl I told, an' at day-break I was there wid two spades an' a shovel an' a crowbar ax' a pick, an' a sack to hould the money. First thing I saw in the field was a thistle wid me garther round it, an' I shtruck the spade in nixt it an' took wan look round—'the last look,'

says I, 'that I'll iver throw, a poor man.' Tare an' ages, what did I see? There was hundhreds av thistles in the field, an' ivery wan had a garther like mine around it! Sure, 'twould take twenty men twenty months av Sundays to dig deep unher thim all, an' all the parish would be there in the mornin' to know what I was diggin' Biddy Mahoney's field for. Begorra, I begin to chry, an' wint straight home to me bed an' sleep till broad day; an' iviry wan said I was dhrunk whin I spoke of it; but the holy saints of hiven know I hadn't a sup taken."

To doubt the veracity of Tim's story would be to put you everlastingly in his black books. He certainly believed it himself, and so did his neighbours. His account of the Leith-phrogan is what is generally accepted in the southern counties, but those who go deeper into the matter find in it a quaint allegory, probably of Druidical times. The little fairy cobbler is the type of industry, and would teach the unthrifty sons and daughters of Hibernia a healthy lesson: that the captor of the fairy must never let go his hold, no matter how the sprite changes his form, inculcates, we are told, oneness of purpose; while the only manacles that can bind him, the plough chain and the clue of homespun yarn, are emblems of the two chief industries of the country. The former symbolises thrift in agriculture—and to the farmer or peasant the Leith-phrogan disclosed the position of treasure hidden in the earth—the homespun yarn refers to the then especially lucrative employment of spinning, and to the merchant was the purse full of gold apportioned. By this quaint myth the peasant was encouraged to ply his industry in the fields, where he would ultimately win for himself a reward in gold; while the trader was to spin and sell his yarn, which would finally endow him with a purse of untold wealth.

It is hard for the Sassenach to grasp how real their fairy lore is to the peasantry in Ireland. To them it is always possible that the Leith-phrogan may be seen cobbling the brogues for his brother elves. Indeed, many a one has heard him driving his nails in sole and heel, but he has been warned of the approach of mortal, and left the eager seeker seeking. They never are abroad in the moonlight but a fearful hope is present that the fairies are at hand, to be heard, at least, if not seen. But the terror of the unknown is very great, and Paddy, who never cares to

be far from his shanty after nightfall, is wont to bethink himself of a prayer or two when alone in the darkling fields or lanes. Any sudden noise or unusual sight in the dusk calls forth a burst of piety that, if it lasted, would entitle the startled sinner to a halo in the next world.

Another member of the fairy community is the Gean-canach (*love-talker*). He, unlike the Leith-phrogan, plies no trade, but is an artist, his profession being that of love-making. A good-for-nothing little imp is he, who frequents lonely valleys and lanes, and appears to the terrified milkmaid lurching along with his hat slouched over his wicked little eyes and smoking a "dhudeen." He never has been known to even enter into conversation with the frightened maid, who flees at the sight of him; but he is ever eager to show himself, and, no doubt, is somewhat affronted at the cold reception he always meets with. Many a time, in the lightsome summer nights, does Molly, the milkmaid, rush into the firelit kitchen, where the hens dozing in the coop by the door, and, perchance, an evil-looking donkey sulkily picking untidy mouthfuls from his heap of grass on the floor, all contribute their share to the civilisation of surroundings that banishes the eerie sensation of a supernatural presence. In she blunders, with her pale face buried in her apron, and seating herself with a tragic haste on the settle ejaculates: "Saints preserve us! The fairies are out to-night. "Devil mind ye," is her fond mother's comment, not, however, without an uneasy glance at the open door, "fitter for ye be knittin' a stockin' for himself within be the fire, than gladiatorin' down the boreen." "Himself," it may be explained, is the term by which the head of the household is known. Of course it is the rascally Gean-canach that has frightened Molly, and by this time he is sucking his dhudeen harder than ever, and apostrophising mortal beauty that does not appreciate his elfish proportions. Very unlucky is it to meet the little "*love-talker*," and he who is disconsolate for the love of a maiden fair is said to have met the Gean-canach. But he again has his lesson to teach to him who will learn; for he personates sloth and idleness, and the excessive pursuit of pleasure; and as he is of bad repute and unlucky to all who look upon him, so will the thriftless mortal who passes his time in love-making and smoking his pipe forfeit his reputation and become a companion to be avoided.

Unlike his cousins, the Leith-phrogan and the Gean-canach, the Clobhar-ceann is never found in the sweet-scented fields and under the silver-white moon. He takes up his abode in the dark cellars where wines grow old; and lurks in the black, dark corners where the fat casks screen him from a chance ray of light. When the night is deep he creeps out and clammers to the round back of a barrel. With fairy awl he bores a tiny hole, and sucks the wine through a wheaten straw. Thus he has been seen, lilting merrily snatches of racy ditties, made by the fairy bard who dwells on the hillside and writes songs for his brethren on the back of a poplar-leaf. Dearly the little tippler loves the cellar of a hard drinker, and in his cellar he drinks and sings the night through while good wine lasts. When Sleep, inconstant as his brother Death is constant, forsakes your pillow, then, at midnight, listen, and you will hear his shrill revelry coming faintly up through the darkness to your silent room.

Many members of the aerial throng keep watch and ward over treasure hidden in earth or water, or over the dead man's grave and stone, and the trees that overshadow it. Where a lonely tree rears his head apart from his brothers of the forest, in some empty waste, there is treasure hid, and through the night fairy sentinels pace about it, that no mortal hand may grasp the coveted gold. Fantastic shapes they take to scare away the daring wight who would essay to enrich himself with the mystic store. When the winds moan in the cold starlight there may be seen two huge black dogs sitting one on each side of the tree, or a black cat and a bull, joined in a strange fellowship, pacing round the sacred spot. And woes to him who cuts a branch or even breaks a twig! Fell disease or dire calamity will bring him to a speedy end. And many a little lake or spring has, too, in its cool depths untold treasure; but jealously does the White Lady guard it from profane hands. He who would peep and pry in dusk-time for glint of gold will be maddened by her white, sad face peering up through the green weeds and warning him away with a look that freezes the blood. The trees, also, that stand in God's acre, and the stones that mark where a man's head once lay, are their care. Misfortune is the lot of one who dares to disturb the deep sleep of death by breaking or dealing lightly with one of these.

But of all creatures of the spirit world that have dealings with men, the pitiful Bean Sighé—Anglicè Banshee—is perhaps the best known in Ireland. She is spoken of as being a fairy, but we would be more inclined to use the term spirit; for she is not one of the “little” people, but appears in the shape of a woman of human size. She may, however, safely be classed under the genus “good people,” a euphemistic term which the simple peasant applies to all “sperrits.” She is the woman “of the piercing wail” who foretells the death of some loved one by piteous weeping, which is heard, sometimes, for three nights before the death takes place; or by appearing suddenly, clad all in white, only, however, to melt from view in an instant with a mournful shriek.

Many old families have a Banshee specially told off to give warning of the approaching death of a member; and these are proud of their ghostly retainer, treasuring up the weird legends of her tidings of disaster shrilled forth under the cold moon. Indeed, she herself comes of an ancient stock as old manuscripts show.

When Meidhbh, the powerful Queen of Connacht, made her expedition long, long since against the Ultonians, a Banshee met her who foretold how that great slaughter of hosts would come to pass and many heroes on both sides would fall. To Connacht's Queen she came in the form of a fair woman who stood by the shaft of the chariot “with twenty bright polished daggers and swords, together with seven braids for the dead, of bright gold, in her right hand.” Asked who she was and from whence, she replies: “I am Feith-linn, the prophetess of the Fairy Rath of Cruachan!” and again and again she cried to Meidhbh, “I foresee bloodshed, I foresee power.” In another old manuscript the prophetess is recorded to have appeared, with less dignity, in the shape of a red and white cow, to a favoured champion warring against the ancient Cuchullainn. There she appears to have joined with her duties of prophetess the office of the Leannan Sighé—of which more anon—for, it is written, she was “accompanied by fifty cows, having a chain of bright brass between every two of them,” a strange band, come to injure Cuchullainn; and their leader assumed the shapes of a black eel and of a greyhound, that she might the more easily confound and overcome him. But the Banshee of to-day comes only as the harbinger of death, flitting and sobbing

in the darkness round the doomed house, and disappearing with a shriek of despair from him who has the courage to look upon her.

The Leannan Sighé, alluded to above, was the familiar spirit that was wont to accompany the champions of old on their fighting expeditions, and often saved them when human aid was of no avail. This mysterious being—now lost sight of in fairy lore—was the Irish genius, who appeared to whomsoever it favoured in the shape of a person of the opposite sex; though to warriors it sometimes came in the form of a man who, invisible to the opponent, guided the weapon of his charge and shielded him from deadly strokes. It was a Leannan Sighé that rescued Eoghan Mor (Eugene the Great), King of Munster, from his enemies, by causing that the rocks and great stones on the field of battle should appear to them to be the men of Munster, so that they hewed and hacked at the stones instead of at their opponents. But this invisible ally has not, as has been said, lived through the ages as have the Leith-phrogan and the rest. If it had it would, no doubt, have taken up politics of late years as a pursuit offering the best field for exercising a bellicose partiality.

Yet there on the green hillside and in the old cromlechs dwell the fairy throng: the “little people” that love to shock the old puritan owl with their revels, and to punish the coward who shuts ears and eyes and hurries on if their merry laughter reach him, or the flashing of their fairy feet in the moonlight catch his eye. And there they will ever dwell while the simple peasant dwells with them, who loves to tell their pranks, treasures up their legends in his heart, and for whom they do exist a real people, with a real history and a real kingdom of their own.

#### THE RHINE FALLS IN WINTER.

BÄLE, at six o'clock of a January morning, after the run from Calais without change of carriage, may be said to be sleep-inducing. But I found my energies recruited by the “café au lait” and warmth of the refreshment-room, with the buzz of a variety of travellers around me. There were men for Davos and men for St. Moritz among the crowd, and the one nearest to me at table seemed quite surprised that any Englishman should be at Bâle at such

a time—in January—and not be on his way to the sunny, sweet-aired Engadine.

After breakfast I held brief communion with a railway official, well buttoned against the piercing air of the platform : the very engines were bearded with icicles, be it understood. Was Schaffhausen conveniently accessible, and could I return thence in time for dinner in the evening ? There seemed no manner of doubt about it ; in fact I had a choice of routes—I forgot how many. Moreover, if I would allow the official to take my ticket for me, I might almost that very moment step into a train which would carry me speedily to Wintherthur, which was as much as saying to Schaffhausen.

This was irresistible. The obliging man brought me a third-class return, which, for a relatively small sum, allowed me to spend eight hours in the train. It would have been a tedious experience had I not travelled third class and been in a corridor car. For the day opened in a languishing way, with fog, and never fully revealed the brightness one expects in the South. Nor were the pines and red-tipped willows and birches of the nearer landscape very engrossing ; nor, after a while, the green river courses and the shadowy, fat-sided houses and spires of this part of German Switzerland. Besides, the heat in the car was a thing to marvel at, contrasting it with the outer cold. Twice I moved gaspingly to different seats. But it was no use trying to escape the parboiling that the Swiss railway authorities think profitable for their clients. Wherever I went I found myself over a steam-pipe, which periodically let loose its vapour. Had I been a potato I should have been cooked in my jacket. As it was, I could only try my heartiest to become acclimatised, and in the meanwhile seek diversion in my fellow-travellers.

We were a red-faced company. I was early astonished by the prevalent blackness of eyes. The local cast of face was indeed rather Spanish than aught else ; and largely Jewish also. I first got an inkling of this latter characteristic in the conduct of a youth, patently Semitic, who fastened himself into the most sequestered corner of the car and caroled to himself the canticles from a book in Hebrew type. My companions paid no heed to this amiable freak. At length, however, with a radiant countenance, the young man shut the book, yawned—it was an air for yawning—and proceeded to balance his cash. The blue-

hooded women, with baskets of eggs and poultry that protested against their travels ; and the vigorous-looking men with double chins ; who constituted the majority among us, chattered on, and no one but myself seemed to notice these significant traits in the young Jew's conduct.

At Wintherthur I was set down for an hour. The mist was cold and clammy, with a tendency towards positive rain. Wintherthur's large houses and factory chimneys did not look seductive. I preferred to sojourn in the refreshment-room, where the midday meal was beginning. The dish of the day was "erbsen" soup. Railway porter after railway porter came in and took his dish of it. I, too, yearned towards it in the abstract ; but the foolish belief was on me that "erbsen" meant "worms," and I could not bring myself to try worm soup, though I had no doubt it was made palatable. Now I know better, and that it was simple, nutritious pea soup which swelled the bosoms of the different persons who indulged in it, and which, together with bread and beer, seemed to constitute so satisfying a meal.

Scenically, I suppose this is the least romantic district in Switzerland. And yet there is something pleasant about heavy-browed cottages, ochre or pale blue, and bulbous-spired churches almost tomato-red, contrasted with green pines and snow at its whitest. We sadly wanted a more gracious canopy of sky, however. But the Rhine soon came to give piquancy to the landscape. It travels hereabouts nearly as fast as an ordinary Swiss train, and its bottle-green waters, broken by many a rapid, are held between high banks wooded with trees, which in winter look snug in their foliage of dried brown leaves.

At Dachsen I left the train to walk to the Great Falls, and so on to Schaffhausen's old city. The air was bracing and the road as hard as iron. I could hear the water's roar in the distance. The sense of expectation grew keen. I knew that the aqueous tumult was in process in the valley before me, on the other side of which the huge shape of the pale Schweizerhof rises, with its background of wooded hills, like a mansion for an emperor. In the season this hotel enjoys a gay time. Brides and bridegrooms come here for their honeymoons, to gaze from their windows upon Rhine's agitated waters lit by the moon's tender beams ; and commonplace tourists of all kinds clatter in its halls. But January is not the season, or anything like it.

Schloss Laufen brought this lesson home to me. The snow lay deep and unswept in its courtyard, whence the approach to the Falls on the southern side is made. The hotel-restaurant here had its shutters up, and having forced the heavy door unaided, I wandered for a minute or two from naked room to naked room, seeking a landlord or waiter in vain. No matter. The quaint little Laufen church with its red body and spire of tiles, red, blue, and green, was as good to see in January as in June, with its mellowed wooden porch and its graves set with little iron crosses. So, too, was the Schloss gateway, becrested, with the date 1546, legibly preserved on it.

But I had not come to Laufen to be disappointed, so I rang the castle bell loud and long. The Schloss guards this bank of the Falls and takes toll of a franc per person from visitors. In olden times perhaps its inmates did even worse things. Rhine's voice here might well outcry the voices of victims whom Schloss Laufen wished to be speedily and completely quit of.

It was comforting to see the door open in response to my summons. The lad who let me in was not abnormally astonished. He exacted the franc, drew my unheeding attention to the variety of useless articles in the hall adorned with pictures of the Rhine Falls, which were for sale; and then turned the key on me in the Schloss Gardens, so that I might wander at will down to the riverside and hold solitary communion with the elves and sprites of this most famous place. Almost immediately—and though I was a hundred or two feet over Rhine's level—the river's spray touched my face. The bubble of course was terrific—far too much for the lungs of any but the best paid of ciceroni.

But the snow lay deep and untrodden here as in the castle courtyard—and there was ice under it that made the zigzagging descent awkward in places. There is a summer-house on a "rond-point" for the use of visitors. It has windows with diamond panes, blue, green, yellow, and crimson, so that looking through them at the Falls you may dye these latter any of the four tints you please. It has also a plaintive inscription inside: "Please, do not write your name on the wall, but in the strangers' book." The comma after "please" is most touching, and so is the Ollandorffian turn to the sentence from the middle. But the appeal seems necessary, though my countrymen are sinners in this respect far less than the Teutons themselves.

Even from the summer-house the scene was a great one. The Rhine is here about one hundred and twenty yards in width, and in a distance that might be covered by a stone's throw, it casts its waters nearly a hundred feet downwards. True, I did not see the spectacle at its grandest. Above the Falls the heads of rocks innumerable rose higher than the blue-green swirl of waters, and the river could by no means in January sweep through space with the fury it shows in early summer, with the first melting of the snow. Still, I had compensation for the diminished volume of the river in the extraordinary cumber of ice and snow in its midst. The spray in fact froze in the air and descended upon the trees of Schloss Laufen and the ice-boles of the Falls themselves in sparkling beads of hail. And the water thundered from one level to another, through and over ice palisadings and excrescences of huge size, the turquoise tints of which were delightful to look upon.

Of course, however, I was not satisfied with this relatively remote view of the river's agitation. I descended to the water's level, in the heart of the turmoil, and in a shower of the frozen spray. Hence I could look across to the pinnacled islets which break the Falls midway, and which appear the most fearsome spots imaginable for investigation. And yet, had it been the season, I could have called for a boat, rowed to the base of the largest of these rocks, and clambered by a stone staircase to the canopied summit thereof. In summer this achievement would seem daring enough to those of weak nerves; yet, methinks, though the bellowing of the waters in January is less extreme, the added trial of ice on the rock steps would have made this ascent injudicious. Be that as it may, I could not accomplish it. I rang the bell for a boatman at the place indicated, and tarried for him in the snow and spray of ice. But he came not, as I might have expected, and I had to be content with the deed in fancy alone.

Schaffhausen claims to be supreme in Europe for the magnitude of its Falls. I suppose those of Tröllbätta on the Gotha in Sweden may, however, almost be bracketed with them. They have the advantage in height, and in the beauty of their banks far superior. But these Gotha Falls are spread over a distance of nearly a mile, whereas the Rhine at Schaffhausen does not mince matters. On the other hand, they can be appreciated with less effort than the Rhine Falls demand. Without a

boat one must fail to carry away an adequate idea of the tremendous volume of water thus hurled over and between the rocks which here interfere with the river's methodical progress towards the sea. From Schloss Laufen one has a thrilling close view of the left Falls; from Schloss Worth, on the other bank, of the Falls as a whole, at a distance of two or three hundred yards. But one ought to be in the heart of the hurly-burly to write its most vigorous impression upon the memory.

Here, as at Tröllhätta, there are mills and factories which borrow from the river's strength. They are not quite welcome, but they are inevitable. The right bank of the river, under the village of Neuhausen, resounds with the whirr of machinery, as well as the crash of the waters, and blue-jacketed artisans pass to and fro, thinking of anything rather than the river's picturesque commotion. I got into the midst of them at the dinner-hour, when I had had enough of the Schloss Laufen side, and had climbed to the castle gate again, to descend and cross the river by the railway bridge. Here I found cause to admire the energy and enterprise of a German tourist of the most common type—a knapsacked youth in a jaeger cap and jacket. He leaped two or three of the lesser runlets of the Falls, and after some discreet tackling scaled one of the rock pinnacles almost in mid-stream. For my part, though I would fain have enjoyed the view his courage obtained for him, I did not seek to emulate him. Several of the streams he had to cross were of red sewage matter, and the iced nature of the rocks seemed to put his adventure in the category of the foolhardy.

At Schloss Worth, had it been summer, I might have lunched or drunk lager beer in a balcony abutting on the river, with Schloss Laufen on its rock immediately opposite. But Schloss Worth's restaurant, like Schloss Laufen's hotel, was a wilderness. The best I could do was to sit to leeward here and smoke one pipe solemnly to the sprites who have the Falls in their keeping. From no aspect is the phenomenon more absorbing. The bridge rises above the Falls, and the vineclad and wooded heights over Flurlingen on the left bank top the bridge; Neuhausen on one hand and Schloss Laufen on the other complete the framing of this noisy picture.

Two hours were soon spent thus. It behoved me indeed to hurry towards Schaffhausen for the afternoon train, in

which I was to be carried saunteringly back to Bâle. From the heights of Neuhausen, level with the assuming Schweizerhof in its woods and gardens—now all snow-decked—I had one more charming view of what I had journeyed to see. Then I gave myself up to the hard highway, with its bullock-drawn carts, its little school-maids with flaxen pig-tails, and its many cafés and restaurants, each with a name that borrowed one or more of the attributes of the Falls. These cafés, however, like the larger restaurants near the river, had suspended their functions on behalf of votaries of the picturesque. You could not in mid-January sit in their vine-sheltered gardens or terraces and drink Rhine wine in honour of the noble stream. Their thick doors were shut fast, and the air was keen enough to justify their double windows.

Schaffhausen itself is a very engaging old town, distinctly mediæval in many of its parts, in spite of the modern mills with electric light which have grown in its suburbs along the river's course. It has a huge old remnant of a castle, and gated entrances, and houses with bowed windows of irregular outline, and bright frescoes on the outer walls of many of its residences. Were I a manufacturer of theatrical scenery, I would make Schaffhausen a close study. As it is, however, one is prone to treat it as nothing but a stage on the way to the Falls.

I was glad to seek rest in the train after my slippery tramp of three or four hours. The extraordinary comprehensiveness of my ticket may be realised when I say that it set me down anon at Zurich. Zurich is the Birmingham and Manchester of Switzerland, though more beautiful by far in its situation than those two towns put together. At another time I should have rejoiced to make its acquaintance. This evening, however, I wished myself further on my way. I have never been in such crowded waiting and refreshment-rooms as those of the Zurich station. At length, however, we were summoned to the so-called express, and after another trying period of semi-suffocation by hot steam, Bâle was regained.

#### MASQUERADES AND TEA-GARDENS A HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

THE Royal House of Stewart, with all its manifold failings, its weaknesses and vices, its indolence, selfishness and inherent

obstinacy, had one good quality ; it was ever a lover of art, a patron of artists. Vandyck found his home at the Court of Charles the First ; Ben Jonson was the friend of James and Ann of Denmark. For them he produced those wonderful masques which were the outcome of his poetic fancy, to which he gave full rein. His pure and elegant verse, the refinement which characterised these artistic conceptions, and made them differ widely from all other pageants, completely captivated the imagination of men like Bacon, White-lock, Clarendon, Selden, while the studious benchers of Gray's and Lincoln's Inns caught the enthusiasm and inaugurated masques of historic fame. The rugged Puritanism of the Commonwealth put its iron heel upon all such frivolities. Under its rule the nation became "nakedly and narrowly Protestant." Every outlet for artistic feeling was barred, any appeal to men's senses was prescribed. No artist ventured to produce a work with either an historical or religious tendency ; his art rose no higher than a good portrait or a hunting scene. Stage plays were counted godless, masques were inventions of the devil himself. Had not Henrietta Maria, the Popish Queen, taken pleasure therein ? Had not money been spent upon them which should have fed the starving poor ? This portion of the denunciation could not be gainsaid. The sums expended on the production of the masques was a serious count in the indictment against them.

Under the Commonwealth the English people learned to take their pleasures soberly. Tea-gardens came much into fashion ; a visit to Bagnigge, Cupers or Marrowbone gardens made the general holiday outing of both upper and middle classes, and during the days after the Restoration it so continued. Charles the Second, whose dissolute Court was an open scandal, durst not, for fear of the Puritans, introduce any godless amusements, such as masques and the like, although Pepys tells us that in his closet some of the wanton beauties of the Court occasionally performed a masque for his delectation, in which my Lady Castlemaine, assisted by the Duchess of Monmouth and others, would dress up in gorgeous habiliments and dance with vizards on. Here was indeed a falling off from the courtly pageants of Jonson and Campion. One masque took place during the Gay Monarch's reign, and is indicative of the reckless profanity of the time. This was the Dance of Death—an imitation of

the Danse Macabre—arranged and led by the King's favourite, the Earl of Rochester, and performed in St. Paul's Cathedral at the time when the plague was at its height. It was said the King was present.

George the First is usually looked upon as a stupid, plethoric German, but his Hanoverian Majesty, for all he looked so dull, was passionately addicted to amusing himself. Herrenhausen, the electoral palace, was a coarse reproduction of Versailles. There was a rustic theatre where, in George the First's young days, the shameless old Platen, his father's favourite, danced and sang in the masques which were performed with a poor attempt at pageantry. Our George had grown up with these tastes, and didn't relish the virtuous austerity he found in his new kingdom. He looked about him for some one to help him to amuse himself, and he found John James Heidegger, who was waiting for a Royal patron to appoint him King of the Revels and pay the bill of the entertainment. Heidegger was the originator of "masquerades." He could in no way be said to be a successor to Ben Jonson, neither could these entertainments, which were oftentimes degrading exhibitions, compare with the refined and classical "masques." Heidegger was nevertheless a man of a certain sort of talent ; he also enjoyed the reputation of being the ugliest man of his time, and he had the good sense to appear proud of this distinction. Pope alludes to him in the *Dunciad* :

And lo ! she bred a monster of a fowl,  
Something betwixt a Heidegger and owl.

Fielding likewise introduced him as "Count Ugly" into the "Pleasures of the Town," and Hogarth often made him the subject of his pencil.

The first masquerade produced by Heidegger at the King's Theatre, Haymarket, in 1717, produced a storm of disapproval. The Grand Jury of Middlesex "presented" the fashionable and wicked diversion called "the masquerade," and particularly the contriver and carrier-on of masquerades at the King's Theatre, in order that he might be punished. The Grand Jury, however, knew their duty better than to punish the King's purveyor of pleasures. The name, however, was altered to "ball" or "ridotto." Practically it was the same thing, and the revels went on until 1724, when the Bishop of London entered the field and denounced these immoral entertainments from the pulpit. Hogarth likewise, who had begun to sati-

rise the follies of the town, produced in this year the first of his masquerades and operas, a satire against Heidegger's popular entertainments. The picture represents a mob of people crowding to the masquerade. The leader of the figures, with a cap and bells, and garter round his right knee, was supposed to be the King, who, it was said, had just given one thousand pounds to Heidegger. The purse with the label, "One thousand pounds," which a satyr holds immediately before His Majesty, is an allusion to this, and strengthens the probability of the story. The kneeling figure on the show-cloth or sign-board pouring gold at the feet of Cuzzoni, an Italian singer, with the label, "Pray accept eight thousand pounds," was designed for Lord Peterborough (Swift's *Mordanto*).

The death of George the First and the advent of the new King made no change in the fortune of masquerades, unless it was to strengthen their position. Under George the Second they attained a social standing which gives them almost historical importance. His second Majesty of Hanover was devoted to such entertainments. When he went on a visit to his little kingdom he gave splendid entertainments. In 1740, after his Queen's death, he had a magnificent masquerade in the Green Theatre at Herrenhausen (the Garden Theatre), with screens of linden and box and a carpet of grass. The stage and gardens were illuminated with coloured lamps. Almost the whole Court appeared in white dominoes, like spirits in the Elysian fields. Another time, still in Hanover, he went to a ball at the Opera House attired as a Turk—the grand one—with a magnificent agraffe of diamonds in his turban, and his dear friend Lady Yarmouth as a Sultana.

England would have been dull after these festivities only for Heidegger. The Royal purveyor was still the "*deus ex machina*," who might be said "to teach Kings to fiddle and make senators dance." He boasted that, by kindly superintending the pleasures of the nobility, he netted five thousand pounds a year. A rival attraction, however, was rapidly rising, before which he had finally to strike his colours. Vauxhall Gardens was now to take the field, and keep it for more than a century against all comers. It was well said of this well-known resort "that a wealthy speculator was its father, a Prince its godfather, and all the fashion and beauty of England stood round its cradle." This would, however, have to

say to its re-incarnation. The gardens were known to the sober tea-drinkers of the Commonwealth and Restoration under the name of Spring Gardens. Samuel Pepys went there by water one summer's day in company with his wife and two maids, Bet and Mercer, and enjoyed himself mightily, as indeed the little man was wont to do wherever he went. In 1712 Evelyn, that sweetest of English writers, writes in his delicate fashion :

"Spring Gardens are especially pleasant at this time of year"—it was the month of May. "When I considered the fragrance of the walks and bowers, with the choir of birds that sang upon the trees and the tribe of people that walked under the shade, I could not but look upon the place as a kind of Mohammedan paradise."

Although it pleased a thoughtful mind like Evelyn's to sit and enjoy nature in Spring Gardens, they were by no means so popular with the common herd as either Bagnigge, Cupers, or Marrowbone Gardens. The last-named catered for the amusement of all classes; the attractions of its bowling green, dog fights, illuminations, not forgetting Miss Trusler's cakes,\* drew all the world there, although it was by no means a safe road, and robberies were frequent. Perhaps this latter circumstance had something to say to the preference given to Spring Gardens after it came into the hands of the enterprising Jonathan Tyers, under whose direction it lost its old name and was given that of Fauxhall, which afterwards became Vauxhall. Tyers was either a man of a certain amount of taste, or he had good advisers. The natural beauties of the gardens were not interfered with; the leafy groves where the nightingales sang were not cut down; walks were made in different directions; a fine orchestra and organ were added, with statues, pictures, and adornments, and in June, 1738, it was opened with a "*ridotto al fresco*," at which Frederick, Prince of Wales, was present, and the company, numbering four hundred persons, wore masks and dominoes. It has been alleged that Hogarth, who was in all things a good friend to Tyers, suggested to him "masquerades" as the best means of filling his pockets. Considering the manner in which the painter satirised Heidegger for a simi-

\* Trusler was the proprietor of Marrowbone Gardens, and when other attractions began to fail, he instituted "Breakfasts," for which Miss Trusler made cheesecakes and fruit tarts, which had a well-deserved reputation.

lar enterprise, this advice would seem hardly consistent, and would not have been in keeping with Hogarth's otherwise upright character. That he took great interest in Tyers's speculation is certain. He helped considerably in the work of embellishment. To him were attributed most of the pictures which adorned the different pavilions; but Mr. Dobson, who has gone into the matter very closely, is of opinion that Hogarth only contributed one painting—that of Henry the Eighth and Anne Boleyn, which it was whispered thinly disguised the likenesses of Frederick, Prince of Wales, and Anne Vane, his mistress. The painter likewise designed one of the tickets, and allowed Frank Hayman to reproduce his "Morning, noon, evening, and night." For this goodwill Tyers presented him with a perpetual card of admission for six persons.

In its infancy Vauxhall had to contend against powerful rivals. Sadler's Wells was a popular place of resort; Marylebone still commanded a fashionable following; and Heidegger enjoyed the exclusive patronage of the King. The favour of the Prince of Wales was, on the other hand, given to Tyers. For him a pavilion was specially erected in front of the orchestra, where he was often to be seen. His patronage, however, was not of much account, his constant quarrels with his Royal parents placed him in the background; and to be in favour with him was sure to mean disgrace with the Court. Vauxhall, therefore, did not rank as the first place of entertainment until after the death of its first proprietor,\* who was succeeded by his son Thomas—the Tom Restless of Dr. Johnson's "Idler." Tom was a clever, enterprising, somewhat erratic individual. He made many improvements in the Gardens, which soon began to attract the world of fashion, the more so that no efforts were made to puff them into notice. On the contrary, we are told "that a disdainful reticence was affected by way of contrast to the touting

advertisements of such places as Sadler's Wells and Marylebone. A statement was made that the Gardens were at the service of the public, and that it was the affair of the public to keep them up." Meantime, it is only probable to suppose that the initiated, or, as the slang of the present day has it, "those in the know," were aware that they would be well entertained and sure of finding the best of good company.

"It is an excellent place of amusement," said Dr. Johnson, "which must ever be an estate to the proprietor, as it is particularly adapted to the English nation, there being a mixture of curious show, gay exhibition, music, vocal and instrumental, and last, but not least, good eating and drinking for those who wish to purchase such regale." The philosopher went there often to enjoy the air, which was most salubrious. The arrangement of the gardens had been brought to great perfection; the walks originally laid out by Jonathan Tyers were enlarged and beautified. There was the Grand Walk; and the South Walk with its triumphal arches, three in number; and the Counter Cross Walk—painted by Canaletto—the Italian Walk; the Dutch Walk; the Temple of Comus; the Chinese Pavilion; and the Grove. The quadrangle which enclosed the Grove was occupied by a range of pavilions, booths, and alcoves, fitted up for the accommodation of supper-parties. Some of these were reserved for persons of distinction; the pavilion fronting the orchestra was larger and handsomer than the others. This was the one originally built for Prince Frederick of Wales. Here were Hayman's four Shakesperian pictures: "The Storm in 'King Lear,'" "The Play Scene in 'Hamlet,'" "Ferdinand and Miranda from 'The Tempest,'" and "A Scene from 'Henry the Fifth.'" The space between this pavilion and the orchestra was where the crowd assembled—a sort of march past of the company, who gathered here to hear the concert and stare at one another. We can pass them all in review: the women in their graceful sacques, the men in their embroidered coats and lace ruffles, their hats under their arms. Here are all the familiar faces which we know as if we had lived in their day—Johnson and Reynolds, Goldsmith, Boswell, the Gunnings with their train of admirers, and the company standing on the benches to look at them. Horace Walpole arm-in-arm with George Selwyn, Fanny Burney trying to look modest, Mrs. Thrale, Lord Chesterfield, and

\* J. Tyers loved the place he had made so beautiful, and shortly before his death had himself carried thither to take his last look at it. He had made a handsome income, and had purchased for his own use Denbighs, near Dorking, Surrey, which now is the property of Mr. Cubitt, who entertained there the Prince Consort. Tyers's garden contained amongst other curiosities a sermon, not in stones, but in boxwood. A representation of the Valley of the Shadow of Death in two compartments—the end of the infidel and the Christian. Such quaint devices were common in the old gardens. The writer remembers seeing in the garden of one of O'Connell's followers insulting remarks upon Lord John Russell, cut in box.

the Earl of March with La Rena, the Prince Regent, and the Great Commoner. What a shifting panorama! Not one is missing, Rowlandson's illustration gives us a glimpse at some of these worthies; it is an aquatinto from Rowlandson's picture, and is a graphic portraiture of the scene.

A summer's night, and all the world of fashion is here. Madame Weichsel stands in the front of the music gallery, with a vast number of fiddles and violoncellos behind her. She is discoursing the sweet strains of either Handel or Dr. Arne; but her eyes are fixed upon two figures in the front row of listeners—if we consider the picture carefully, we find that nearly all the eyes turn in the same direction—a young pair, most attractive by reason of their extreme youth, good looks, and high position of one—they are Florizel and Perdita. The Prince is costumed in a strawberry-tinted coat with blue facings, a lace ruffler, a black cocked hat on his head. He is evidently pressing his suit hard, to which pretty Perdita is listening, her head a little to one side. A dainty figure she is in white satin train, evening bodices, and lightly powdered curls. Her expression is a mixture of archness, innocence, and coyness. The whole assemblage watches the scene.

Major Topham, one of the fops of the day, openly sticks his glass in his eye and stares impudently. A gentleman with a wooden leg has the chivalry of a hero, and only looks furtively at the fair one—as does the dwarf close by her. Two ladies affect indifference to the flirtation, and seem engrossed with one another; but we notice that the one in blue is glinting from under her eyes in the Royal direction. These two are said to be the Duchess of Devonshire and Lady Duncannon. With no positive grounds beyond conjecture, the supper-party, in one of the boxes to the left, is also supposed to consist of Johnson, Boswell, Goldsmith, and Mrs. Thrale; the last-named, however, unless it be meant for a caricature, is singularly unlike the lady. The supper-party on the left-hand side is evidently made up of rich citizens out to enjoy themselves. The food is their attraction; and they do not heed the music or stare at the Prince and his mistress. Jackson, the waiter, is opening for them a second bottle of champagne, although, to judge by their looks, they already have had enough.

Another picture of Rowlandson's shows us the beau-monde dancing al fresco. The

occasion is evidently some festivity, for the orchestra and gardens are illuminated.

On cold or rainy evenings the concerts were given in the music-room, where there was an elegant gallery for the musicians. The ceiling was fan-shaped, like those of the Adam brothers (it may have been after their design, the music-room not being in the original plan); it was highly decorated, as were also the columns, and has a resemblance to Zucchi's adornment of Lord Derby's house in Grosvenor Square. The panels of the walls were gradually filled with paintings, principally by Hayman. Mr. Taylor gives a long list of his pictures, including that of the female dwarf, Madame Catherina, who was one of the attractions of the place. The concerts given in Vauxhall were of exceptional excellence. They usually began at six, and some of the best musicians of the day took part. Dr. Arne often conducted, and his sweet songs were always popular. Mrs. Mountain, Mrs. Weichsel, and her daughter, the beautiful and gifted Mrs. Billington, Signor and Signora Storace, Incledon, Braham, Mrs. Bland, and Miss Stephens all sang here. There was likewise a stage, where ballets were produced; while in the garden rope-dancing, pyrotechnic displays, balloon ascents alternated with varying success. We must not omit one of the great attractions, notably to the young, the Dark or Druids' Walk, which was arranged purposely for the plighting of lovers' vows. On both sides there were rows of lofty trees, which met at the top and formed a delightful canopy and shade even in the hottest weather; the finest singing birds built their nests here, and the sweet chorus was delightful. Some of the bushes were supposed to be enchanted, and discoursed—by means of a musical box concealed in the shrubbery—fairy music.

Walking through the Dark Walk, however, was not encouraged by judicious chaperons. Young ladies who respected themselves and were well brought up, would not enter it unless by daylight or in company with papa or mamma. In most of the novels and romances of the day the Dark Walk figures—the heroine generally managing to find her way there and to get involved in a distressful situation with the villain of the story, from which she is ultimately rescued by her honourable lover; generally a most desirable husband. Evelina got herself there and went through the programme, was insulted by a party of rakes, championed by Sir Clement

Willoughby only to be exposed to his advances, and was finally saved from a very compromising situation by her noble lover, Lord Orville—this was a pretty full evening for a young lady fresh from the country.

Fielding places his Amelia in a delicate distress while drinking her tea in one of the pavilions; poor soul, she couldn't even enjoy her little outing in peace; was there ever a sweet and virtuous creature so tortured as was this good wife and mother? Of course her good-for-nothing husband had left her, and although she had the young clergyman and the old gentleman with her, they could not protect her from the admiration of two of the sparks of the town who respected no woman who had no fitting male protector. The prettiest part of the incident comes from Amelia's efforts to conceal her annoyance from Booth, whose hot blood would soon have involved him in a quarrel.

It would be endless to instance the many writers who have introduced Vauxhall Gardens into their stories; from Goldsmith, who has given us the immortal Mr. and Mrs. Bramble and the sprightly Lydia Melford, to Thackeray, who sent Pendennis there with Fanny Bolton; but this last was in our own day when its glories had departed. Some one said it had become a low affair when you could take a milliner's apprentice there for half-a-guinea—the prices of admission had changed from the first commencement, when the entrance was one shilling, later four shillings, and in the days of the Regency the subscriptions stood at from six to ten guineas the season.

#### HERMITS, ANCIENT AND MODERN.

At first sight you might be inclined to question the existence of the modern hermit. The Census returns, with all their queer farrago of occupations and callings, make no mention of his peculiar way of life. Nor does the hermit, as such, appear in any of the directories, Metropolitan or provincial. But he exists all the same, and in considerable numbers; and not only he but she, for the hermit may be of either sex. The hermit is one who goes out into the wilderness to live alone, so the ancient fathers tell us, and nowhere is it easier to carry out the eremitical plan than in the wilderness of a great city such as London. The difficulty, indeed, with

any one of narrow means and possessed of no great wealth of friends, is to avoid falling into the ways of the recluse. The necessity of earning daily bread keeps most people in the kind of stir that averts positive stagnation, but when this is removed by some slender kind of provision, the tendency to a life of seclusion is even encouraged by the roar of traffic and the passing of busy crowds.

And we shall not be surprised to find hermits in Drury Lane; there was one not many years ago, a fresh-looking rustic, after the fashion of the farmer of Tilbury Vale,

In the throng of the town like a stranger is he, who lived in a garret for years, and died there in absolute solitude and seclusion. Early in the morning a few years ago, you might have met a pleasant-looking dame, in black, with the bonnet and shawl and general costume of A.D. 1830, and a little troop of dogs kept strictly in order, who would disappear in one of the narrow courts behind St. Martin's Lane, where she lived as much apart from all the world about her as the most rigid votaress of old times.

But what would you have said to the sight such as might have been witnessed not so long since, of an elderly lady encamped in the back garden of a large house in a pretentious neighbourhood, surrounded like Robinson Crusoe with goats, and dogs, and cats, but with hardly as good a shelter from the weather? As it happened, the drill-ground of one of our volunteer regiments abutted on the encampment; and the genial young fellows made great friends with our lady anchorite, who was excellent company, by the way, and full of anecdote. They built her a capital little hermitage of boards, they fetched and carried for her, and made quite a pet of the old lady—and even proposed to adopt her as the titular mother of the regiment. But one day the myrmidons of the law descended upon the little settlement, and the poor old lady was driven out to seek shelter where she could.

Another London hermit was an Irish gentleman of good family and of some means, who lived in a narrow cul-de-sac out of Holborn, in the midst of a swarm of poor Irish, his countrymen. Poor as they might be, they none of them lived so frugally as the "gentleman" who was known to be one of the "rare oould sort," and was respected accordingly, and who, indeed, made himself useful among the

community, writing letters, and occasionally settling trifling disputes, while he was exonerated from any share in the free fights that decided more knotty causes of controversy. At his death it was found that he had led this penurious life in order to speculate more freely on the Stock Exchange, which he had done for twenty or thirty years with such mixed success, that though he left no debts, neither was there sufficient to pay his funeral expenses.

Some twenty years ago there lived in a little Welsh town on the sea-coast, in the upper room of a humble cottage, a scholar and divine, once [a fellow and tutor of his college, who on some evil report affecting his good name, had abandoned all his appointments and disappeared from the knowledge of all his old associates. He led a blameless life, associating only with the very poor, and living on the frugal fare appropriate to the hermit's cell :

A scrip with herbs and fruit supplied,  
And water from the spring.

But the Welsh have a natural tendency to a life of seclusion and meditation, and stories are told of some of their bards who spent the greater part of their lives hardly stirring from the box bedstead built in the thickness of the wall, which would well represent the couch hewn out of the rock of the earlier anchorite.

Yet another Welsh anchorite of recent times had the curious notion of sleeping all day and roaming about during the night, and this in a country village where there was nothing going on after nine p.m.

The champion hermit of the century, however, was Lucas of Radcotes Green, near Hitchin, a sketch of whom formed the framework of an early Christmas Number of "All the Year Round," entitled "On Tom Tiddler's Ground." Lucas's forbears were wealthy West Indian merchants settled at Liverpool, who had acquired a small landed estate in Hertfordshire. Here the hermit lived the life of any other country gentleman of moderate means till the death of his mother, to whom he was warmly attached, in 1849, when he was nearly forty years old, an event which seems to have wrecked him altogether. The pleasant, modest country house and its lawns and gardens were given up to neglect and decay, while its owner bestowed himself in a wretched outhouse, with a blanket for all his apparel by day or night—and a very dirty blanket at that, fastened at the neck by a wooden skewer—and for a couch only a heap of

ashes. Yet he does not seem to have courted notoriety, but rather to have had it thrust upon him. But he had neighbours in the literary world, and soon obtained a notoriety to which he did not seem averse. Anyhow, he was not unfrequently interviewed in succeeding years; but he was an awkward subject—"crede exerto"—as he seemed to have an insatiable curiosity as to the circumstances of his visitors, and assailed them with a cross-fire of questions, while he was impenetrably reticent as to his own way of life. When all was done he would give you a glass of sherry, which tasted of soot, and hob-a-nob cheerfully with you, and discuss the affairs of the day, but his own affairs, never; which was disappointing. He was visited by great numbers of tramps, to whom he seems to have been kind on the whole, giving always a glass of gin, and occasionally a shilling to the respectful vagrant.

Altogether the poor man does not seem to have harmed anybody, and it is possible that in leading this wretched life, he had some notion of an expiation for his own sins or those of another, which, if mistaken, was not altogether unworthy. Anyhow, Lucas lived this way for five-and-twenty years, and was at last, in 1874, found insensible and half-frozen on the top of his ash-heap, and taken away to die elsewhere.

When Lucas was a boy an old lady was still living who carried the eremitic record to well into the previous century. Old Mrs. Lewson, of Coldbath Square, who died 1816, is said to have been born A.D. 1700—but this is probably a mistake—in Essex Street, Strand; whence she removed on her marriage early in life to a wealthy but elderly husband, to the then rural neighbourhood of Coldbath Fields. Left by her husband's death a young and wealthy widow, it was perhaps some unlucky affair of the heart that first inclined her to seclusion. Anyhow, she lived a voluntary prisoner in her own house all the rest of her life, retaining still the garb of her early years, when George the First was King,

With ruffs and cuffs and fardingales,  
even to the days of the scanty skirts and  
clinging robes of the Regency.

Contemporary with Lady Lewson, as she was always called in the neighbourhood, was Lord Byron, the uncle of the poet, who, after killing his neighbour Chaworth in a brawl at a London tavern, retired altogether into seclusion at New-

stead, varying the monotony of existence by training the crickets of his lonely hearth—so the story runs—and with such success that they would dance around him in a ring. When the old lord died, tradition adds, the crickets left the house "en masse." Naturally Lord Byron's humbler neighbours set him down as a magician and the crickets as evil spirits, who had gone to attend him in another place.

For the notion that the secrets of nature could be best worked out in age and seclusion, with spells and meditations deep and subtle incantations, long commended itself to popular belief. And Milton seems indefinitely to share it when he invokes for his old age

The hairy gown and mossy cell,  
Where I may sit and rightly spell  
Of every star that heaven doth show,  
And every herb that sips the dew.

Milton's aspirations for the peaceful hermitage have been shared by many others. Even the genial and social Sir Walter Scott had imagined for himself a lonely cell by St. Mary's Lake near the "bonny holms of Yarrow." And Wordsworth himself would have been no bad tenant for the hermitage on St. Herbert's Isle, in Derwentwater, that St. Cuthbert had once visited, who himself loved so dearly a solitary life.

In the "Black Dwarf," too, Scott has pictured that morbid sense of physical imperfections which leads so many to a life of practical seclusion. On the other hand, in the jolly hermit of "Ivanhoe" he brings the hermitage pleasantly into connection with vert and venison, and the jolly companions of the merry greenwood.

The genuine mediæval hermitage was more often found in the city than in the forest. Victor Hugo gives us a description of one in the heart of Paris, the cell of Madame Roland, of Roland's Tower, who, for grief at the death of her father in the crusade, shut herself up for the rest of her life. "And here for twenty years the desolate damsel awaited death as in a living tomb, sleeping on a bed of ashes without even a stone for a pillow, clothed in a dirty sack, and subsisting on the charity of passers-by." Could it have been that our Lucas had read the famous romance of Victor Hugo, and had modelled himself after Madame Roland?

Hugo pictures another Parisian anchorite, "who during thirty years chanted the seven Psalms of penitence from a heap of straw at the bottom of a cistern, and

even more loudly than ever at night; and to this day you may think to hear his voice as you enter the Rue du Puits-qui-parle." This kind of hermitage, by the way, can be paralleled in England, for at Royston there is a hermitage cut out of the chalk thirty or forty feet below the surface, accessible only by a narrow shaft, so that the voice of the penitent would literally cry from the depths.

There were hermitages, too, attached to most of the principal churches. St. Paul's had one, if not more, and doubtless the Abbey too. A cell attached to the Church of St. John's at Chester was reputed to have sheltered the unfortunate Harold, who, according to this tradition, recovered from his wounds, and lived as a humble anchorite for many years of the Conqueror's reign.

A still earlier legend is of Guy of Warwick, who, returning as a palmer from the Holy Land, assumed the hermit's frock, and lived for years all unknown in a lonely cell adjoining the gate of his own castle. Here he lived on alms daily supplied to him as one of a company of thirteen poor men—a mediæval thirteen club—at the hands of his faithful wife, who regularly entreated their prayers for the safe return of her dear lord. The dour old Guy remained unmoved, and it was only in his last moments that he revealed himself by sending to his wife the ring she had exchanged with him at her bridal.

Then there is the ballad of the Hermit of Warkworth, in which the hermit is represented as sheltering young Percy, Hotspur's son, who, disguised as a shepherd, has won the heart of a noble damsel to whom the hermit presently unites him. And this is the true rôle of the hermit in romance, as witness Friar Laurence in "Romeo and Juliet," whereas Goldsmith in doubling the parts of hermit and lover, as in Edwin and Angelina, suggests a hermitage "à deux" which, however pleasing, seems to contravene the rules of the game.

As for the hermit in his religious aspect, we shall find him of most respectable antiquity. In the early centuries of our era the Thebaid of Egypt was almost crowded with them, and women as well as men embraced a life of seclusion, which was not, however, without its social features. So that to be quite alone one had to climb to the top of an obelisk or pillar like the famous Stylites. Saint Anthony, too, was one of the hermits of the Thebaid who

found the company to be met with rather oppressive. But the tradition of this mode of life seems to have been handed down to the Celtic Church, and its religious settlements seem to have been rather clusters of anchorites than monasteries of the more regular pattern.

But, indeed, the hermit belongs to all the religions of the world. He is in full swarm among the disciples of Buddha. The Brahmins consider the ascetic life as the final and necessary stage of existence; the Mohammedans have their solitary dervishes. And where there is no particular religious sanction for the life, people take to it of their own accord. All of which only shows that in the general current of social and gregarious life, there are numerous eddies and backwaters, which draw insensibly towards solitude and seclusion.

## A LITTLE COQUETTE.

A STORY IN FOUR CHAPTERS.

### CHAPTER II.

HILDA and Lord Langridge had been engaged three months. During that time she had alternately fascinated and perplexed him. She was never in the same mood two days together; she changed like the wind. Sometimes she was gracious and almost tender, and his heart beat high with hope; sometimes she was cold and scornful, and made him absolutely and completely wretched. But in whatever mood she was, she never failed to charm him. Her caprices only served to augment a love which partook of the nature of blind infatuation.

"I don't know any other man alive who would put up with me," she said one day in a fit of remorse after she had been treating him particularly badly. "You must tell me if you want to be off your bargain, Langridge."

But Langridge was so shocked at the idea that the queen could do wrong, that she was really touched, and called him a dear, and sent him away happy.

They had been engaged in November, and it was now the end of January. Lord Langridge talked of giving a ball at Fairholme Abbey, where Hilda was to queen it as the future mistress of the fine old place. Hilda was enchanted at the idea. She had become feverishly restless of late, and seemed to need continual excitement to keep her from flagging.

"It will be perfect," she said delightedly. "I shall enjoy it ever so much. Things were really getting too dull to be endured."

"I am so glad you are pleased, my pet," said Langridge, his round face beaming with pride at the idea that he had hit upon something to please her. "You shall have the ordering of the whole thing, invite all the guests, and do exactly as you like with everybody. It shall be your ball, and you shall be queen of the evening."

Accordingly one wet, raw, misty February day, he rode over to the red-gabled house to consult Hilda about some final arrangements. The ball was to take place on the morrow, and Hilda had already been two or three times to Fairholme Abbey with her mother to see that things were to her liking. She had had many caprices, some of them very expensive ones, but Langridge was her slave and obeyed her in all things. He had even knocked down the wall between the morning-room and the dining-room in order to make a particularly magnificent supper-room, which was to be decorated with garlands of Maréchal Niel roses. Nothing was too extravagant for Hilda just then.

As he entered the garden-gate and walked up the path, leading his mare by the bridle, he met Hilda herself, issuing forth from the hall door. She was attired in a close-fitting ulster and a small hat with a veil. Her boots were strong and thick.

"My dear Hilda!" said Langridge in great astonishment and distress, "you surely are not going out this morning?"

"As you see," returned Hilda determinedly, lifting a strong sole for his inspection. "I am going for a tremendous walk. I have been bottled up all day, and now I have burst."

"But," objected Langridge, with a piteous look at the soaking earth and streaming sky, "it is not fit weather for a dog to be out in."

"Ob, but I am a very strong dog, you know," returned Hilda, starting off down the path with an air of determination, "and I never take cold. It is better than stopping indoors in the house and going mad—which I should inevitably do. You wouldn't like me to go mad, would you, Langridge?"

"Don't talk so childishly!" said Langridge, losing his temper a little. "You must at least wait until this rain stops."

"It will not stop all day. Good-bye."

"I am coming with you," said Langridge firmly.

"You are going to do nothing of the kind. I wish to go for a walk alone."

"But I came to ask you about the ball——"

"I am sick to death of the ball," returned his betrothed pettishly. "Go and ask mamma anything you want to know."

Langridge followed her, still leading the mare. The red-gabled house possessed no stables.

"I don't want to consult your mother. I want to consult you."

"Then for goodness' sake consult me now and have done with it," cried Hilda, standing still in the rain, with a little stamp of the foot. "What is it? If only you knew how absurd you look, dragging that great animal after you all down the path!"

"I dare say I often look absurd in your eyes," said Langridge, a little ruffled; "but I came over on purpose to——"

"I know! I know!" cried Hilda, in a fever of impatience. "What is it? I am in an awful temper this morning, Langridge."

"So it seems," said Langridge.

"That speech was dry enough to make up for all this rain," said Hilda, recovering herself a little and laughing. "Tell me what you want and let me go."

"You have forgotten to ask Mrs. Dalrymple to the ball," said Langridge, in a tone of determination, "and I want to know why?"

"Mrs. Dalrymple? The widow with the Piccadilly weepers, do you mean? I never meant to."

"Piccadilly weepers!" ejaculated Langridge, in a tone of horror. "Whatever do you mean?"

"Aren't they Piccadilly weepers, those muslin things and streamers? I am sure I thought they were. I don't like her, anyhow, and I don't want her. She is so frightfully pious that she seems out of place at a ball. Her conversation always makes me feel as if I had been in several churches."

Langridge turned towards the house with a hopeless gesture, and Hilda started off as fast as her feet could carry her. Langridge tied his horse to a tree and entered the house. Mrs. Clifford greeted him with smiles.

"I am so sorry," she began, "dear Hilda has just gone out. She insisted on walking over to the village in spite of the weather.

I told her how very angry indeed you would be if you knew it."

"I told her that myself," returned Langridge, walking over to the window and staring out at the dripping trees and the dismal little pools under them, "but my wishes did not seem to have any effect upon her."

"Dear Hilda seemed a little restless this morning, I thought," said Mrs. Clifford apologetically.

After a pause the figure at the window said, without turning round:

"A woman who is happy and contented is very seldom restless, Mrs. Clifford. I have sometimes thought lately that Hilda is neither the one nor the other. If—if I am not the man to make her happy, it—it is not yet too late to draw back."

Mrs. Clifford looked up in great alarm, and determined to give her foolish daughter a piece of her mind on her return home. A throb of terror shook her at the mere thought of Hilda losing such a chance after all.

"Hilda is perfectly happy," she said hurriedly. "I am sure she has everything a woman can want. You indulge her every whim. The fact is, you spoil her," she added, with tentative playfulness.

"Hilda is of too decided a character to have her head turned by attentions from me," returned Langridge a little bitterly. "I have done my best to make her happy, and I honestly believe that I have failed. I can only do my best," he added with a sigh. "And she has only to ask for her freedom back and——"

"My dear Lord Langridge," said Mrs. Clifford, in the greatest alarm, afraid that Hilda had done or said something past forgiveness, even by her humblest slave, "I assure you that Hilda would be heartbroken if she thought she had offended you. Whatever has she done?"

"Nothing, nothing," said Langridge hastily. "Perhaps it was only fancy. She—she was restless and unhappy, I thought. I could not bear it if I thought I made her unhappy," he added in a low voice.

"But she is not unhappy! I assure you she is not. Why, she is devoted to you."

Langridge smiled a little grimly, and turned the subject by speaking of the ball.

"The dining-hall looks rather fine now that wall is down," he said, going over to the fireplace and standing with his back to it. "There is no denying that Hilda

has perfect taste. That idea of only having certain flowers in certain rooms is very pretty."

"The Abbey will look like a huge conservatory," said Mrs. Clifford, falling readily into his mood, "and I am afraid these whims of dear Hilda's are very expensive."

"If she is pleased, that is all I care for," said Langridge abruptly. "What flowers does she want to wear herself? I must send her a bouquet."

"She will wear a black gown," said Mrs. Clifford, her tones betraying that she had fought over the subject with Hilda. "So absurd of her! To dress like a dowager when she is only twenty-one—and almost a bride, too."

The word "bride" roused Langridge for a moment.

"I wish she would wear white," he said wistfully. "She looks so lovely in white."

"I will tell her what your wishes are," said Mrs. Clifford eagerly. "It is not too late to change, and—"

"Please say nothing about me. My wishes are only likely to influence her the other way," said Langridge with a slight return of his former bitterness.

"Oh, but I shall make a point of it! Hilda must not be allowed to become unreasonable. As for flowers—" she hesitated.

"I suppose she is not going to wear any?" said Langridge, with rather a hard note in his voice.

"She says not. Really, I don't know why Hilda has taken such foolish fads into her head. One would think she was bent on making herself look as plain as possible," said Mrs. Clifford in a vexed voice.

"Hilda could never look plain. And she shall have her own way in everything," said Langridge, with a sudden resolute return to good humour, "even about not asking Mrs. Dalrymple."

"Dear Hilda does dislike her so," murmured Mrs. Clifford apologetically; "but, of course, your wishes—"

Langridge laughed.

"My wishes again! I have no wishes but Hilda's. Still, Mrs. Dalrymple is an old friend, and I am sorry she has not been asked."

He walked over to the window again, and once more surveyed the gloomy day. Then he announced abruptly that he must be going, and rode off in a puzzled frame of mind.

In the meantime Hilda had been ploughing her way steadily along the country road that led to the village. A keen wind had sprung up and blew gloomily through the black hedges. It was impossible to hold an umbrella up, and she walked along with bent head. The battling with the wind seemed to take some of the fierce restlessness out of her. She recognised a force in nature more restless than her own spirit. The exertion seemed to calm her.

"There is nothing like a good tear in a blustering wind for knocking the ill-temper out of one," she thought, as she turned to go home after she had finished making her purchases. "I feel almost amiable now, and certainly not half so restless. I wonder if poor Langridge is still cooling his heels at home waiting for me?"

A heavy grey mist was shrouding the landscape with a sort of ragged curtain as she walked along. A fringe of grey cloud hung so low that it obscured the tops of the trees. As her mental excitement wore off physical reaction set in, and Hilda began to feel wet, chilly, and miserable.

"I hope I have not caught cold," she thought as the wet mist clung about her; "it would be very hard on Langridge if his future bride appeared at the ball with a red nose and tearful eyes. Colds in the head are so unbecoming."

Then her thoughts ran on the dress she was going to wear. She had insisted on black—but it was a glittering black which would sparkle with every movement, and show off to perfection the dazzling whiteness of her neck and arms. The more simple her attire the better taste it would be, she decided. She did not wish to jump into white satin and orange-blossom before it was necessary. As for flowers—

"They only get withered and faded," she said to her mother. "If Langridge asks you, be sure you say I do not mean to wear any. He is certain to send me some forget-me-nots or sentimental rubbish of that kind."

The wind was abating a little, and she ventured to put up her umbrella again. On ahead she could see the figure of a man coming towards her through the mist. For one impatient moment she thought that it was Langridge who had come to meet her. A second look told her that the figure was too tall and shapely to belong to the owner of Fairholme Abbey.

The stranger also had his head bent, and his collar well up to his ears. As

they passed each other Hilda peered curiously at him to see what he was like; at the same moment a gust of wind suddenly turned her umbrella inside out. She gave a little cry of distress; the umbrella was flapping and straining like some huge bird that was bent on carrying her off as his prey in the darkness.

The man with the overcoat pulled up to his ears stopped politely, and asked if he could render her any assistance.

"Please throw the thing over the hedge for me," said Miss Clifford with a gasp of fatigue. "I have got my fingers all mixed up in the handle, and I feel sure I shall be up in the clouds like a new sort of comet unless you help me."

The umbrella handle was one made to sling on the wrist, and for a moment she could not free herself from it. The stranger subdued the struggling thing, and took it from her.

"Am I really to throw it over the hedge?" he asked, looking at her.

She had been too occupied before to notice his face. But now she scrutinised him with sudden alarm.

"Yes, please," she began. "I—"

The umbrella was over the hedge in a moment, and the stranger had lifted his hat and passed on with a smile. She stood irresolute for a second or so, looking after him. Then something stronger than herself seemed to urge her to action. The stranger had not gone many paces. She sent a feeble cry after him.

"Captain Curwen!"

He turned and came up to her, a smile still hovering over his lips.

"So you have decided to recognise me at last," he remarked, without offering her his hand.

"At first I didn't know—I wasn't quite sure—" she faltered.

"I knew you in a moment; and I found you in a scrape as usual. You used to have a faculty for getting into scrapes, Hilda."

He called her Hilda, and spoke to her in the old superior, domineering way—just as he used to do, she thought. He had not changed in the least.

"Are you stopping here long?" she asked him.

"In this particular spot? No, for I shall be soaked through, and you too. Only you are soaked already. You had better run home and get your wet things off."

He turned and walked beside her, and she obeyed him meekly. She had called him domineering, and said that he treated her as a child. He did so still; but she bowed to the master hand.

"I have come home for good," he announced abruptly, as she did not speak.

"Oh, indeed! Here?" said Hilda rather faintly.

"Of course. My mother would never forgive me if I settled elsewhere."

"I suppose not."

They had wonderfully little to say to each other, these two who had not met for so long. Hilda seemed tongue-tied, and he made no effort to break the silence.

At the cross-road he stopped and held out his hand.

"I must say good-bye. You are looking very pale and tired, Hilda, but otherwise you are very little changed. Not quite so sprightly as usual, perhaps; but that is easily accounted for by the depressing weather and the loss of your best umbrella."

She shook hands in silence, and they separated. As she walked in at the gate of the red-gabled house, she told herself that she hated him more than ever.

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